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WARLORDS™

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WARLORDS

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LET IT BE KNOWN THAT ONCE (THOUGH NO ONE KNOWS FOR SURE WHEN) THERE EXISTED UPON A DISTANT WORLD FOUR KINGDOMS UNDER THE DOMINION OF FOUR WARLORD BROTHERS, EACH WISHING TO WREST FROM THE OTHERS TOTAL CONTROL OF THAT CLEAN GREEN WORLD. FEW, OF COURSE, PROFITED FROM THIS PERPETUAL STATE OF SIEGE, BUT ONE WHO DID IS AS WELL-KNOWN TODAY AS HE WAS THEN.

HIS NAME WAS "JUST PLAIN DWAYNE", A TROLL OF REMARKABLE WIT AND GUILE... A WASTREL WHO PLAYED ALL FOUR CORNERS AGAINST THE CENTER AND LINED HIS POCKETS WELL UPON THIS, THE WORLD OF THE...

WARLORDS

FWIP!

MMMM... TASTY!

BUT NOW, WHERE WAS I?

THAT DREAM WAS JUST GETTING GOOD! A *MAID* FOR EACH SEASON! AND I WAS ON...AH, YES... *SPRING!*

ON YOUR FEET, YOU!

HUH?

THEN CONSIDER THIS, KNAVE--EITHER YOU END YOUR *RETIREMENT*, OR I END YOUR *LIFE!*

YOU AND WHOSE *ARMY?*

BEING NEW TO THIS PARTICULAR AREA, I NEED DIRECTIONS! THUS, YOU SHALL SERVE AS MY--

I HAVE NO TIME FOR LOST SOULS! BESIDES, I NO LONGER DO GUIDE-WORK!

UH-OH!

UH... YOU KNOW, YOU NEVER *DID* FINISH THAT REQUEST OF YOURS, M' LORD!

NOW, WHAT EXACTLY IS THE *NAME* OF THIS PLACE YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS WOULD LIKE DIRECTIONS TO?

AND ELSEWHERE...

MOVE, YOU OLD FOOL...

...LEST MY MIND EMPTIES OF THE INVENTIONS THAT IT STORES!

YEG, SIRE.

MANY SCIENTIFIC WORKS AWAIT MY FINAL TOUCH...

...WORKS THAT WILL SEND MY REPUTATION TO EVEN FARTHER BOUNDARIES OF THIS WORLD!

BUT IF I MUST DEPEND ON YOUR ANCIENT LEGS TO CARRY THE KEYS...

...I MAY NOT EVEN ENTER MY LABORATORY THIS DAY!

AT LEAST *MY* LEGS, FEEBLE AS THEY MAY BE, DO THEIR *OWN* WALKING, SIRE.

WHA--? HOW DARE YOU QUESTION MY GENIUS!

OOOF!

PERHAPS A GOOD FLOGGING WILL SET YOUR MIND STRAIGHT, TURNKEY!

YES--A *LESSON* TO TEACH YOU WHEN AND *HOW* TO USE YOUR OLD TONGUE!

MANY THANKS, SIRE.

THE DOOR OPENS TO THE ERRATIC DIN OF A MAMMOTH WORKSHOP, UPON INDUSTRIOUS SUBHUMAN LABORERS WORKING LITERALLY UNDER A TRUE SCIENTIFIC GENIUS...

AH, MY LIEGE! I AM GLAD YOU CAME! I HAVE ANOTHER GREAT CREATION TO SHOW YOU! PERHAPS MY GREATEST YET!

THEN COME DOWN FROM THERE, LEO, MY FRIEND! CONVERSING FROM THIS DISTANCE IS A STRAIN ON YOUR VOICE!

I AM NOT CONCERNED WITH MY VOICE, SIRE!

THOUGH IT MAY NOT BE THE MOST NOBLE OF DESIRES, MY ONLY CONCERN IS THAT MY NAME, LEO NARDO, GO DOWN IN HISTORY.

HERE IT IS, SIRE! FEAST YOUR EYES!

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, OLD FRIEND!

IDIOT! YOU DO NOT EVEN *SUSPECT* THAT I -- AND I ALONE --

-- TAKE CREDIT FOR *EVERY* ONE OF YOUR SCIENTIFIC MARVELS!

WHA-? A SUIT OF ARMOUR?

AH, SIRE, BUT NOT *JUST* A SUIT OF ARMOUR...

...IT IS A VERY *SPECIAL* SUIT OF ARMOUR!

A VERY SPECIAL SUIT OF ARMOUR INDEED... AND SOON, UPON ENTERING THE MAIN HALL, KING FESTIVO REVEALS "HIS" LATEST WONDER!

FAITHFUL KNIGHTS, THERE IS SOMEONE HERE I WOULD HAVE YOU *MEET*... FOR *HE* SHALL BE LEADING *YOU* INTO BATTLE!

YOU MAY SALUTE MY NEW *CHAMPION!*

HA-- *DUMBFOUNDED*, EH?...

...TOO *SHOCKED* EVEN TO SPEAK!

WE CAN *SPEAK*, SIRE! BUT FINDING THE PROPER WORDS--*THAT* IS THE PROBLEM!

TO BECOME THE KING'S CHAMPION ONE MUST *PROVE* ONESELF IN *BATTLE*...

AND I SAY IT IS THE *SAME* FOR THIS ONE!

COME, LET US *SEE* THE STUFF OF WHICH HE IS MADE!

BUT, THOUGH THIS HEADSTRONG KNIGHT LANDS HIS HEARTIEST BLOW...

BY MY *SOUL!* HE IS NOT EVEN SHAKEN!

INSTANTLY, THE OTHERS JOIN THE FRAY...

HAVE AT HIM, MY KNIGHTS! BEST HIM -- IF YOU CAN!

...BUT THE RESULT IS HARDLY TO THEIR LIKING!

ENOUGH, MY CHAMPION! -- HALT!

RETURN THIS "KNIGHT" TO THE FLOOR AND ALLOW ME TO REVEAL YOU!

GOOD LORD!

WH-WHAT IS IT?

MY LATEST INVENTION ...THE ULTIMATE MAN OF WAR.

WITH HIM AT MY SIDE I AM INVINCIBLE!

MEANWHILE...

FASTER, TROLL! WE ARE EAGER TO TEST THE METTLE OF RESTIVO'S TROOPS!

DON'T WORRY! YOU'LL ARRIVE SOON ENOUGH!

AS I'VE SAID, I KNOW OF A SHORT-CUT!

BEHOLD!--THIS SHOULD SHAVE MANY HOURS OFF YOUR TRAVEL TIME, SIR CONQUEROR!

A BRIDGEWAY WIDE ENOUGH FOR EVEN YOU AND YOUR HORSE TO PASS!

PRAY YOU, KNAVE, THIS LOG HAD BETTER BE STURDY ENOUGH TO--

TRUST ME, CAPTAIN! IT'S STRONG..

HO! WHAT ANTIC DO YOU PRESS?

THAT IS, AT LEAST STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD ME!

BUT, AS FOR YOU..

NO ANTIC, M'LORD.. JUST A TEST OF YOUR STEED'S NOSE...

...AND YOUR OWN GULLIBILITY!

NO-OOO!

IT WAS NICE OF YOU TO PROVIDE ME WITH THE MEANS OF MY ESCAPE!...

.. EVEN IF YOU *DID* PUT IT AROUND MY NECK!

THE ANCIENT LOG, ALREADY HALF ROTTED THROUGH, CANNOT WITHSTAND THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE FALLING STEED...

WHEW! I'M GLAD THAT WORKED'..

YIIEEE!

SORRY OLD MAN-- BUT WHEN I SAID I DIDN'T DO GUIDE-WORK I *MEANT* IT!

YOU SHALL *PAY DEARLY* FOR THIS'-- *BOWMEN!* ATTACK-- ATTACK!

AH, YOUR ARCHERS ARE TRAINED WELL. THEIR ARROWS STRIKE THE EARTH WITH GREAT AUTHORITY!

LET ME *LIGHTEN* YOUR BURDEN, SIR

I DESERVE *SOME* PAYMENT FOR MY SERVICE!

MY HANDS AROUND YOUR SCRAWNY NECK WILL BE YOUR ONLY REWARD, TROLL!

A CURSE BE ON HIM-- NO GOLD... JUST... HMMM... A ROUGH LAYOUT OF RESTIVO'S CASTLE...

HE OUGHT TO BE INTERESTED IN WHAT HIS ENEMY IS UP TO-- PERHAPS EVEN *GRATEFUL!*

AND SPEAKING OF GOOD KING RESTIVO, LET US LEAP AHEAD OF OUR HERO AND SEE

...FURTHERMORE, IT *MOVES*! IT *OBEYS* THE KING'S EVERY COMMAND! AND, WITH ITS AID, WE SHALL EASILY EMERGE *VICTORIOUS* O'ER *ALL* ENEMIES!

SOON, THE FOUR KINGDOMS WILL BE UNDER KING RESTIVO'S CONTROL! AND YOU, THE SUBJECTS, SHALL *REAP* THE *BENEFITS*!

DOES HE TRULY EXPECT US TO BELIEVE IT MOVES?

PHEW! IF THIS DEVICE IS *HALF* AS GOOD AS HE SAYS, IT STILL SHOULD BE WORTH QUITE A *PRICE*!

AND, WHEN I STEAL THE *PLANS* FOR THAT MONSTROSITY AND *SELL* THEM TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER...

...I WILL BE *SET FOR LIFE*!

SO, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THERE IS A SCOUNDREL IN THE AUDIENCE... AND JUST TO MAKE THE SCENE COMPLETE, ANOTHER KNAVE, ONE ALREADY FRIENDLY TO OUR EYES, APPROACHES!

WELL, WELL... DIDN'T EXPECT *THIS* MANY PEOPLE TO BE MILLING ABOUT!

SOME SORT OF CELEBRATION GOIN' ON!

THESE CELEBRATIONS SURE HAVE A WAY OF BRINGING OUT THE *RIFF-RAFF*! HMMM... *THAT* FELLOW OVER THERE!

.. HE HAS PROVED USEFUL TO ME IN THE PAST.

WHAT HO, BERTRAM? THIS CERTAINLY IS A *SURPRISE*! CAN IT BE TWO SEASONS HAVE PASSED SINCE WE LAST SCHEMED TOGETHER?

OH NO!-- NOT *DWAYNE*!!

QUIET! CAN YOU NOT *SEE* THAT I AM IN THE *GUISE* OF A MONK?!

CALM DOWN, FRIEND BERTRAM! *NOBODY'S* PAYING ATTENTION TO US! THEY'RE ALL TOO CAUGHT UP IN THE FESTIVITIES!

YOU'D THINK YOU WEREN'T *GLAD* TO SEE ME!

YOU'RE NOT STILL UPSET ABOUT THAT LITTLE *MESS* THAT FELL UPON US WHEN WE ACQUIRED THAT MAGISTRATE'S PRIZE MARE AND ENTERED HER IN A FAIR AUCTION?

EH.. HOW WAS I TO KNOW IT WAS THE SAME AUCTIONEER WHO...

...SOLD THE SAME MARE TO THE SAME MAGISTRATE ONLY THE DAY BEFORE... EH?

LISTEN, TROLL.. IF YOU FOUL MY ATTEMPT TO STEAL THE PLANS TO THAT INVENTION.. I'LL--

PLANS TO THE INVENTION, HUH?

THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH YOU-- FOR A SIZABLE FELLOW, YOU THINK TOO SMALL!

NOW, *LISTEN*, I HAVE AN IDEA!-- I RECENTLY CAME INTO POSSESSION OF A *FLOOR PLAN* TO RESTIVO'S CASTLE!

I'LL MAKE SURE EVERYONE IN THE CASTLE SLEEPS *VERY SOUNDLY* TONIGHT'--THEN *YOU'LL* SNEAK INTO THE *ROYAL* CHAMBER... AND--

THAT NIGHT, CREEPING WITH THE STEALTH OF AN OX...

WHAT AM I *DOING*-- HOW COULD I LET THAT *TROLL* TALK ME INTO THIS?

WITH A *MAP* TO FOLLOW, I DOUBT THAT EVEN *BERTRAM* COULD FUDDLE THIS JOB!

STILL, I WISH HE WEREN'T *TAKING* SO LONG!

ONE *KIDNAPPED* KING ON HIS WAY DOWN! TRULY HE IS PUTTING UP QUITE A *FIGHT*!

JUST GET HIM *DOWN* HERE!

OH, *NO*! ONLY TWO PEOPLE IN THE BED AND YOU GRAB THE *QUEEN*!

D-DWAYNE?!.. THE TROLL'OH, HOW I *PRAYED* TO BE RESCUED' BUT I NEVER DARED HOPE--

LISTEN, M'LADY-- YOU'VE--

YOU DO NOT *KNOW*-- CAN HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT IS LIKE!

RESTIVO HAS BECOME SO UTTERLY CONSUMED WITH *POWER-LUST*! HE EVEN--

YES, *THAT'S* IT, BERT-- *SHUT HER UP*! AND WHILE YOU RE AT T, NOTICE HER ABSENCE OF A *BEARD*!

THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN YOUR *FIRST* CLUE THAT SHE WASN'T THE *KING*!

WE *STILL* HAVE TIME TO EXCHANGE HER FOR THE KING AND THEN GET *OUT* OF HERE BEFORE THE POTION I SLIPPED INTO EVERYONE'S WINE STARTS WEARING OFF!

BUT *THIS* TIME I'LL GO *WITH* YOU!

A FULL WEEK'S JOURNEY FROM RESTIVO'S CASTLE, THERE STANDS AN EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE ROYAL DWELLING-PLACE, ALBEIT A COLD AND FOREBODING STRUCTURE. THIS IS THE PALACE OF KING MARCUS...

...AND AS COLD AS IT MAY SEEM ON THE OUTSIDE, THINGS ARE WARMING UP...

...WITHIN! -- TRULY THIS IS A PLACE OF POWERFUL MAGIC...

PLEASE, MIGHTY ONE, HAVE *MERCY!* I WAS ONLY MOMENTS LATE TO YOUR SUMMONS -- I MEANT NO DISRESPECT!

I TRUST YOU HAVE *LEARNED* YOUR *LESSON!*

VERY WELL, *FIRST MINISTER* -- I SHALL *PROVE* MYSELF *BENEVOLENT* AND *ALLOW* YOU TO *LIVE*.. *THIS* TIME!

HEAR ME! -- *I* AM THE POWER! AND I SHALL NOT BE SO LENIENT IF ANYONE *AGAIN* DISOBEYS ME!

NOT BAD. YOUR -- "HIGHNESS"?

WHO DARES SPEAK THUS TO ME?

FORGIVE ME, HIGHNESS.

...BUT THIS IS HARDLY A SITUATION IN WHICH YOU WILL NEED YOUR WIZARDRY!

WE COME TO BESTOW UPON YOU A MOST IMPRESSIVE GIFT!

IF THIS BE JEST, LITTLE ONE I'LL--

RESTIVO!!!

YES, SIRE! WE TOOK HIM AS OUR CAPTIVE, KNOWING YOU WOULD BE MOST PLEASED TO HAVE HIM!

WELL, MY BROTHER--HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE IN THE REALM OF MAGIC??-- AS MY PRISONER!

UM, CONSIDERING ALL THE TROUBLE WE WENT THROUGH IN GETTING HIM HERE..

...I DOUBT IF A FEW SMALL SACKS OF GOLD WOULD.

GOLD? HA!

DESPITE YOUR "GIFT," YOU HAVE ACTED IMPUDENTLY! THUS I SHOULD SNUFF OUT YOUR LIVES! BUT I WILL NOT! APPRECIATE THAT AND BEGONE!

WHA..?

HMMM, PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE ASKED FOR THE GOLD BEFORE I SHOWED HIM WHO WE HAD!

REALIZE, MY BROTHER, THAT WITH BUT ONE FLIP OF MY WRIST, I CAN.

PERHAPS WE CAN DEVISE SOME *OTHER* SCHEME THAT WILL--

COME, BERTRAM! LET'S GET *OUT* OF HERE!

NO! I AM NOT *ABOUT* TO LEAVE!

WE PUT *TIME* AND *SWEAT* INTO THIS ENDEAVOR!

BUT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN *DO!*

THAT MAY BE WHAT *YOU* THINK, BUT *I* BELIEVE OTHERWISE!

HEAR ME, KING MARCUS -- YOU CANNOT SHOO US AWAY LIKE FLIES!

WE DESERVE *PAYMENT* FOR OUR TASK, AND I..

HOW *DARE* YOU AFFRONT ME SO! YOU WERE *DISMISSED!*

NEVER *AGAIN* WILL I TEAM WITH ANYONE SO *STUPID!*

BERT! DON'T BE A *FOOL!*

SORRY ABOUT THIS, BERT... BUT IT'S FOR YOUR *OWN GOOD!*

--UNFFF!

BE CAREFUL, FOOLS!

UH-OH! DIDN'T WANT HIM TO FALL ON ANYBODY!

THAT'S ALL WE NEED NOW.. A *SQUASHED* RESTIVO!

IT HAPPENS THEN. A SCIENTIFIC WONDER REVEALED!

AN UNWORTHY TRICK HAS BEEN ATTEMPTED! THAT IS NOT RESTIVO!

GOOD LORDS! I'VE BEEN TAKEN!

THE THING'S A FAKE!-- A MECHANICAL IMITATION!

NOW WE'RE REALLY IN FOR IT!

Y-YOU THOUGHT YOU.. THOUGHT YOU COULD--

MARCUS IS SO CONSUMED WITH ANGER, HE CAN'T EVEN SPEAK STRAIGHT!

IT IS THE FOULEST TREACHERY EVER TO BE PLAYED UPON THIS ROYAL PERSONAGE!

AND, FOR SUCH A BLASPHEMY, YOU SHALL PAY DEARLY!

BUT REALLY-- ALL I WANTED TO SAY WAS--

LET EVERY CREATURE THAT BREATHES-- EVERY THING THAT LIVES, KNOW.

...THAT I MUST HAVE MORE THAN MERE SATISFACTION!

UH-OH, HE'S GOING TO BLOW!

YOU SHALL ALL FEEL MY WRATH!

WHEW!--IF I COULD ONLY FIND A WAY TO *BOTTLE* THAT STUFF I COULD MAKE A *FORTUNE!*

OH, MY SWEET LORD! WHAT HAS THAT TROLL GOTTEN ME INTO *THIS* TIME?

NO!-- WAIT!-- IT WAS YOU, TROLL!-- YOU ARE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THAT THING TO ME!

BELIEVE ME, YOUR MAJESTY, YOUR HIGHNESS, YOUR GRACE -

YOU ALONE WILL PAY!

I WASN'T TRYING TO TRICK YOU!

I DIDN'T MEAN FOR YOU TO THINK IT WAS YOUR BROTHER!

I, UH, BROUGHT IT HERE SIMPLY AS AN EXAMPLE OF HIS WORK!

HE HAS BUILT AN ARMY OF THESE MECHANICAL BEINGS...

...AND PLANS TO STORM YOUR CASTLE!

YES, RESTIVO WOULD ATTEMPT SUCH A JUVENILE SCHEME!

YOU HAVE JUST SAVED YOUR OWN MISERABLE LIFE, TROLL!

UHHH..HE BOUGHT IT!

S-STILL I DO WISH TO MAKE AMENDS

...FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE I HAVE CAUSED YOU!

HOW, TROLL?

EH, PLEASE, TAKE MY SERVANT, BERTRAM!--HE IS A BIT SLOW, BUT A HARD WORKER HE WILL SERVE YOU WELL!

EH, I ONLY WISH TO REGAIN THE PURSE HE HAS BEEN HOLDING FOR ME

HEY, YOU CAN'T--

SILENCE, OAF.. AND AS FOR YOU, TROLL, I WISH NEVER AGAIN TO SET EYES UPON YOUR UGLY FACE!

AS YOU WISH, MAJESTY!

HEH, HEH LUCKY FOR ME POOR OL' BERTRAM WAS A THRIFTY FELLOW!

AND THIS AMULET I COPPED OFF OF MARCUS

OUGHT TO BE WORTH SOMETHING TO SOMEONE!

BUT, RIGHT NOW, I THINK IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE STILL BEING ALIVE!

GROG ALL AROUND, INNKEEPER!

I COME TO REGALE YOU ALL WITH WONDROUS TALES OF TRUE ADVENTURE

.I HAVE MET WARRIORS WHO ARE NAUGHT BUT MACHINES! I HAVE BATTLED A KING, WAS LIFTED ALOFT BY HIS MYSTIC FORCES!--YET, I ESCAPED UNHARMED!

AND TO YET TESTIFY TO THE TRUTH OF MY TALE, SOME OF YOU MAY RECOGNIZE...

.THE VERY AMULET OF WARLORD MARCUS!

AND YOU, TROLL, MAY RECOGNIZE THIS AS THE SWORD OF A MAN WHO ONCE PRESSED YOU INTO SERVICE!

HUNH?

NOW, TELL THESE GOOD PEOPLE THE TALE OF HOW YOU CAUSED ME TO TUMBLE INTO A BOG! AND OF THE FATE I PROMISE YOU!

UH-OH!

I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT YOU FOR SOME TIME, TROLL-- MY ANGER GROWING MULTIPLYING' THUS HAVE I DECIDED TO WHITTLE YOU DOWN TO AN EVEN SMALLER SIZE.

.. BY DETACHING YOUR LIMBS ONE BY ONE AND THEN BY--

WELL HERE WHY DON'T YOU START WITH A LEG?

YOU SHALL NOT WIN THIS FIGHT THROUGH TRICKERY THIS TIME, TROLL!

I-

SLUT

OUT OF MY WAY BUFFOON!

UNHAND ME, YOU ARE INTERFERING WITH THE KING'S BUSINESS!

NOBODY CALLS ME *BUFFOON*, BLADESMAN!

LEAST OF ALL SOMEONE ILL-MANNERED ENOUGH TO DERIVE HIS PLEASURE BY PICKING ON SOMEONE SO MUCH SMALLER THAN HE!

THAT ROAST WAS MINE BEFORE IT SOMEHOW ENDED UP ON YOUR SWORD

AS FOR YOUR KING, GIVE HIM THIS MESSAGE FROM GALSFORD, THE SLAUGHTERER!

OOF!

YOUR CAPTAIN WAS NOT MUCH OF A CHALLENGE BUT PERHAPS YOU TWO WILL GIVE ME MORE SPORT!

UNNH!

HMMM.. OUT COLD!

PERHAPS YOU M'ISSED YOUR CALLING, CAPTAIN-- THIS SKEWERED MEAT IS QUITE TASTY-- QUITE TASTY INDEED!

STOP THIS FIGHTING, ALL OF YOU!

MANY TIMES IN THE PAST HAS THIS TAVERN BEEN DESTROYED BY YOUR ILK! I SHALL NOT LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!

IT IS I WHO MUST CLEAN UP YOUR MESS! DID ANY OF YOU CONSIDER THAT?

NAY! YOU SOLDIERS ARE ALL ALIKE! RUFFIANS WHO CAN THINK OF NAUGHT BUT BATTLE!

AND I SHALL NOT HAVE IT PERSIST! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

MMMM-- A BIT HEAD-STRONG, BUT *QUITE* NICE INDEED!

OOOO

WH-WHERE AM I? MY HEAD -- THE PAIN-- IT S--

I--

LOOK! SEE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE! THE SMALLEST AMONG YOU HAS BEEN INJURED! WHY MUST IT EVER BE THE SMALL AND INNOCENT WHO SUFFER?-- POOR DEAR.

AHH, THIS IS WONDERFUL BUT I MUSTN'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE!

INSTEAD, I'D BETTER START CONSIDERING MAKING MYSELF SCARCE, WHILE MY OLD FRIEND, THE CAPTAIN, IS STILL UNCONSCIOUS!

WHA-?

GOD SAVE US!

HOWEVER, IT IS NOT TROUBLE FROM THE CAPTAIN THAT DWAYNE MUST CONSIDER BUT THE HORRIBLY DIFFERENT KIND OF MENACE WHICH IS AT HAND...

... THE EMOTS OF KING DOMINIC!

BE NOT AFRAID SIMPLE FOLK--WE COME NOT TO HARM YOU--

. BUT TO SAVE YOU FROM YOURSELVES AND YOUR WICKEDNESS!

YES.

..OF COURSE

..TO SAVE US.

FROM OURSELVES

BOARD THIS COACH NOW IT IS ONLY THUS THAT YOU SHALL ULTIMATELY RECEIVE YOUR SALVATION!

YOU TOO, LITTLE ONE! DO NOT LAG BEHIND!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR FRIENDS HERE, BUT DON'T WORRY, MAIDEN--

IT'S NO GOOD! SHE ISN'T LISTENING! SHE'S JUST LIKE THE OTHERS! IN SOME SORT OF TRANCE! I..

I DON'T LIKE IT, BUT I GUESS I'D BETTER PLAY ALONG!

APPARENTLY, EVERYONE IS UNDER THESE KNIGHTS' SPELL BUT ME AND I DON'T THINK THESE EMISSARIES WOULD TAKE TOO KINDLY TO ANY OF MY TRICKS!

ONWARD, FOR THE LOVE OF DOMINIC!

AND AS OUR DIMINUTIVE HERO DEPARTS FOR CLIMES UNKNOWN.. WITHIN RESTIVO'S KINGDOM WE FIND --

THE TIME HAS COME, MY FAITHFUL KNIGHTS! WITH MY NEW CHAMPION TO LEAD US, WE SHALL EASILY DEFEAT MY BROTHER MARCUS'S MYSTIC FORCES.

...LEAD ON, THEN, MY CHAMPION! WE HAVE MANY MILES TO RIDE BEFORE BATTLE!

HA! SURELY MARCUS DOES NOT EVEN SUSPECT MY STRATEGY! WE SHALL TAKE HIM COMPLETELY BY SUR--

THWAK

NO! WAIT! THE ARCHWAY! YOU WILL BE--

KLUNK

THAT SIMPERING OLD IDIOT NARDO! HE DARES CALL HIMSELF AN INVENTOR, AND YET HE CANNOT EVEN BUILD A SOLDIER SMART ENOUGH TO DUCK!

TRULY, MY CHAMPION'S HEAD MAY NOT BE THE ONLY ONE TO ROLL THIS DAY!

RESTIVO, YOU ARE INDEED A FOOL...

AND IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE AMULET YOU WEAR EVEN NOW I COULD EAGL--

--WAIT! MY OWN AMULET OF WILL!

IT WAS HERE.. ABOUT MY NECK! OF THAT I AM CERTAIN! YET IT BE GONE! STOLEN!

I HAVE BEEN BETRAYED! BUT WHO WOULD DARE--?

THE TROLL

...IT MUST HAVE BEEN HE! AND WHEN I FIND HIM, I SHALL--

THE GUARDS ARE DISTRACTED BY SOME NEW AND MOST FRIGHTENING RAGE FROM WAR-LORD MARCUS!

THIS IS MY CHANCE!

YOU ENJOYED SEEING ME LIFT THESE HEAVY BLOCKS! NOW I WILL ENJOY SHARING WITH YOU THE WEIGHT OF MY BURDEN!

MARCUS IS STILL RANTING UP A STORM! APPARENTLY WISHING TO TEAR THAT IMP, DWAYNE, LIMB FROM LIMB!

BUT NOT IF I CAN MAKE GOOD MY ESCAPE TO YON BOATYARD AND FIND THAT LITTLE TRAITOR FIRST!

IT ALMOST BEMUSES ME THAT, THAT SMALL CONNIVER WHO MADE PROFIT BY MY IMPRISONMENT WAS ALSO MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR MY CRAFTY ESCAPE!

NONETHELESS... I AM *FREE!*

HIS PASSAGE, HOWEVER, DOES NOT EXACTLY GO UNNOTED...

LORD ALMIGHTY! THIS GOES FROM BAD TO WORSE!

MY ONLY WISH, FOUL SERPENT, IS THAT I SIT UNDIGESTED IN YOUR STOMACH FOR DAYS TO YOUR GREAT DISPLEASURE!

...WHILE...

WE'VE BEEN TRAVELING FOR QUITE SOME TIME--ON THESE HARD WOODEN SEATS! YET EVERYONE ELSE SEEMS PRETTY CONTENT.

...FAR TOO CONTENT, IF YOU ASK ME!

AS FOR MYSELF, AT THIS MOMENT I ACTUALLY BELIEVE I'D GO AS FAR AS TO TRADE THIS PRETTY LITTLE TRINKET...

...FOR A MORE COMFORTABLE SEAT!

WAIT! WHAT'S THIS? SOME SORT OF INSCRIPTION! ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO PRONOUNCE!

BUT LET'S SEE NOW..."KUB-CO-JUM."

WHAT IN THE NAME OF...

HOLD! WHAT IS THIS I SENSE?

MY WISH.. ABOUT THE HARD SEAT! I SAID THE WORD...

...AND THE AMULET GRANTED IT!

SOMEWHERE SOMEONE IS MAKING USE OF MY AMULET.

MMMM...

...AND IF IT IS THAT ACCURSED TROLL...

...I WILL FIND HIM!

YESSS..I'M BEGINNING TO SEE...

HMMPHF! JUST MY LUCK! NOW THAT I'M FINALLY COMFORTABLE, WE'RE SLOWING DOWN..

COME OUT NOW AND BASK IN THE *LIGHT*, MY CHILDREN!

I DO NOT LIKE THE SOUND OF THIS!

OR THE... LOOK' OF WHAT LITTLE I CAN SEE IN THIS BLINDING LIGHT!

SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED! *THE IMAGE*... GONE!

BUT IT WAS THE TROLL, OF THAT I AM *CERTAIN!*

PEACE BE WITH YOU, MY CHILDREN! YOUR LIVES WERE FILLED WITH STRIFE AND PAIN. YET NOW, ALL OF YOU WILL BE ONE WITH ME!

ALL HAIL THE GREAT AND GOOD KING DOMINIC!

WHAT IS THIS?..

A *TROLL!*

WARLORD DOMINIC! FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, THE *MADDEST* OF THE FOUR BROTHERS' I SHOULD HAVE FIGURED AS MUCH!

THESE PEOPLE ARE LOOKING UPON HIM AS THOUGH HE WERE A *GOD!*

AT LAST *MY* PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED!

THIS IS INDEED A FINE MEAL, YOUR WORSHIP! BUT I'M NOT SURE I QUITE UNDERSTAND! WHY DID YOU SINGLE ME OUT?

THERE IS AN EXCELLENT REASON, LITTLE ONE!

THE OTHERS WHO ARRIVED WITH YOU SHALL SERVE ME IN THEIR OWN TIME AND IN THEIR OWN FASHION...

...BUT I HAVE A CERTAIN TASK WHICH IMMEDIATELY I WISH TO ENTRUST TO YOU, MY SON

THIS LEG OF FOWL IS GETTING LESS AND LESS APPETIZING BY THE *SECOND!*

LOOK OUT UPON MY PEOPLE! THEY ARE HAPPY, AT PEACE WITH THEMSELVES AND AT PEACE WITH THE WORLD.

...FOR THAT IS WHAT I BRING THEM! UNLIKE MY BROTHERS, I AM A MAN OF PEACE

THAT IS WHY, FOR SOME TIME, I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DELIVER THIS PLEDGE OF PEACE TO MY BROTHER PHILIPE, WHO INDEED IS THE MOST NOBLE OF MY KIN! IF ANY OF THEM WILL GIVE UP THE WAYS OF WAR, IT IS HE!

YET, TO GET TO THE LAND OF MY BROTHER, ONE MUST PASS THROUGH THE TROLL LANDS... *YOUR* LANDS

I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THEY WERE KILLED OR CAPTURED, BUT NONE OF MY MEN WHO HAVE VENTURED THERE HAVE RETURNED! BUT I THOUGHT THAT YOU, BEING A TROLL YOURSELF

SAY NO MORE, MY LIEGE!

LEND ME YOUR SWIFTEST STEED AND THIS SCROLL IS AS GOOD AS DELIVERED..

...TO THE NEAREST DITCH! AND I'M AWAY FROM THIS MADHOUSE WITH A FINE MOUNT!

TRUST ME, SIRE!

FOR THE LOVE OF DOMINIC!

I TRUST ONLY THAT MY MEN WILL SEE THAT YOU KEEP YOUR WORD, LITTLE ONE!

ONLY THE STARS CAN KNOW HOW I GET MYSELF INTO THESE SITUATIONS!

MEANTIME.. A SEA WHICH USUALLY PROVIDES LITTLE MORE THAN DEATH, FOR ONCE HAS NOT TOTALLY COMPLETED ITS TASK...

HE IS FARTHER AWAY THAN I THOUGHT..

..HE SIMPLY APPEARED CLOSER BECAUSE HE IS SO MASSIVE.

HE STILL BREATHES! THAT IN ITSELF, IS AMAZING!

I HAVE HEARD MANY TALES OF MEN SUCH AS THIS, BUT HAVE NEVER SET MY EYES ON ONE!

COME, WE MUST TELL OUR LIEGE OF THIS EVENT!

AND SOON...

HE WHO WAS MY FRIEND!

FEAR NOT, GOOD SUBJECTS... TRULY, THE FATES HAVE SMILED UPON US FOR THIS GIANT OF A MAN HAS THE SAME COUNTENANCE OF HIM WHO PASSED ON MANY YEARS AGO..

OOOO...

AS THE DAYS PASS AND HEALTH RETURNS TO A BEWILDERED GIANT, KING PHILIPE WALKS BESIDE THE ONE CALLED BERTRAM...

.. I NEVER KNEW MY FATHER SO PERHAPS IT IS TRUE: PERHAPS YOU ARE RIGHT!

I AM! YOU LOOK EXACTLY AS HE DID, BACK UPON THAT FATEFUL DAY BEFORE HE LEAPT IN FRONT OF A SPEAR INTENDED FOR MYSELF!

.. DURING THAT BLOODIEST OF WARS WHICH ULTIMATELY DIVIDED THIS ONCE FINE LAND INTO ITS FOUR PRESENT KINGDOMS!

AND NOW YOU ARE HEIR TO HIS LANDS AND THE FORTUNES HE ACQUIRED WHILST IN MY SERVICE

THEN, AS HE WAS ONCE YOUR CHAMPION, SO, NOW, I SHALL BE!

AND WE MUST REUNITE THE PEOPLE OF THESE LANDS. SO THAT FINALLY WE MAY ONCE AGAIN LIVE IN PEACE!

AND SO IT COMES TO PASS UPON THE FOLLOWING DAY THAT THE FORCES OF PHILIPE ARE READY TO RIDE INTO BATTLE, READY TO FIGHT FOR THE NOBLEST CAUSE IN LIFE...

...WHILE ELSEWHERE

WHAT IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT IS UNHOLY?

FEAR NOT! THIS BE BUT THE ENTRANCE TO THE LAND OF THE TROLLS!

A PLACE WHERE EVEN THE STOUTHEART KNIGHT HAS BEEN AFRAID TO VENTURE!

IF THIS BE DECEPTION, TROLL...

FOLLOW ME! THIS WAS NOT CONSTRUCTED FOR THOSE OF YOUR SIZE!

LOWER YOUR SPEARS...AND YOUR HEADS AS WELL!

CAN'T LET THEM KNOW THAT THIS IS AS NEW TO ME AS IT IS TO THEM.. BUT RIGHT NOW THIS IS MY ONLY HOPE!

AND MORE DANGER DOES AS THEY TRAVEL THROUGH A CAVERNOUS PRISON!

AFTER DAYS OF DARKNESS, THEY EMERGE, ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES UNDER...

ATTACK! WE ARE ATTACKED!

YOU WILL PAY WITH YOUR LIFE, TROLL!

ONLY IF YOU WAIT YOUR TURN, SIR KNIGHT...

HOLD! A CLIFF. PULL UP, PULL UP!

AND NEARBY...

THOK

THEN, SUDDENLY, THROUGH THE STILLNESS.

BLLLLL

THAT SOUND. WHAT IS

LOOK!

QUICKLY! OVER THE SIDE!

AND THERE IS NOT EVEN A BREATH'S TIME FOR HESITATION...

REGROUP--LET US PURSUE THE LIGHT-- FOR THE *HOLY* CAUSE!

WE'RE IN SOME SORT OF A CAVERN! AND HOPEFULLY, THIS OPENING WILL LEAD US OUT OF THESE *ACCURSED* TROLL LANDS!

THE FORCES OF PHILIPE ASSEMBLE FOR BATTLE!

HOPEFULLY OUR MESSAGE FROM DOMINIC WILL QUELL THEIR YEARNINGS FOR BLOODLUST!

YOU WERE RIGHT, TROLL, AND YOU HAVE DELIVERED US TO THE HEART OF PHILIPE'S DOMAIN

THEN I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE, SINCE MY SERVICE TO YOU IS ENDED.

WHA-?

INDEED, TROLL, AND IT SHALL BE MY GREATEST HONOR TO ASSIST YOU!

OF ALL THE FOUL, PLAGUED..

...WAIT!

THE AMULET! IT HELPED ME BEFORE! AND ALL I NEEDED TO DO WAS READ ITS INSCRIPTION ALOUD!

I ONLY HOPE THAT I CAN TALK FASTER THAN I CAN FALL!

KUB-C9-JUM!

IT'S WORKING...

...THANK SAN FON!

APPARENTLY WARLORD DOMINIC HAS A VERY PECULIAR WAY OF REPAYING GOOD TURNS!

ALL I KNOW IS THAT I DO NOT LIKE BEING USED AND SAT UPON!

GOOD HEAVEN! DOMINIC'S KNIGHTS ARE CUTTING THROUGH THOSE MEN AS EASILY AS A BLADE PARTS LARD!

SO MUCH FOR THEIR MISSION OF PEACE

AMULET.. IF YOU ARE WORTH ANY DEED AT ALL, RELEASE YOUR POWER.. NOW!

LET THEM DO WHAT THEY WILL, BUT I HAVE MY OWN LITTLE SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THEM!

KUB-C9-JUM!

BY ALL THAT IS GOOD AND TRULY HOLY-- SEND THOSE EVIL ONES TO THEIR JUST REWARD!

AH, I HAVE HIM!

THEM!

I MAY HAVE SAVED A LOT OF LIVES. BUT KNOWING HOW MUCH THE SOLDIERS OF THIS WORLD *ENJOY* BATTLE, I DARESAY THESE MAY WELL BE DISPLEASED WITH ME FOR SPOILING THEIR PLEASURE!

YOU HAVE SERVED US WELL, STRANGER! TRULY YOU POSSESS POWERS BEYOND THOUGHT! THUS, AS KING OF THIS HONEST PLACE, I BESEECH YOU TO JOIN US IN OUR MOST NOBLE CAUSE!

BUT, YOUR MAJESTY, IT IS NOT MY DESIRE TO--

GADS! BEHIND THE KING! IT S--

AHA! THE CAUSE OF MY GREATEST PAIN--

--I SWORE, DWAYNE, THAT I WOULD ONE DAY REMOVE THAT UGLY HEAD FROM YOUR PUNY BODY! AND NOW--

NO, BERTRAM! DO NOT ACT RASHLY! DID YOU NOT SEE WHAT HE DID?

HE HAS SERVED US WITHOUT THOUGHT OF REWARD FOR HIMSELF AND MAYHAP HE SHALL--

HUH?

L-LOOK! HE... HE VANISHES!!

COME TO ME TROLL. *COME!*

COME SO THAT YOU MAY AT LAST FEEL MY WRATH!

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I'M REALLY *SCARED!*

MY GODS! WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME HAS TRANSPIRED THIS TIME?

ALL THOSE SOLDIERS --GONE! NOTHING HERE LOOKS REAL! IT'S SOME SORT OF A DREAMWORLD, AND I CAN'T...

AMULET... IF YOU ARE TRULY WHAT YOU SEEM... PLEASE RELIEVE ME OF THIS DILEMMA!

KUB-C9-JUM!

NO! THE LITTLE FOOL IS RESISTING, USING THE AMULET...

...IF HE PERSISTS, HE WILL...

NO!

KBLOOOM

SPA FON! NOW WHAT??

THIS PLACE SEEMS STRANGELY FAMILIAR! THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT ALL OF THIS, SOMETHING WHICH JOGS CERTAIN MEMORIES--MEMORIES OF LONG AGO!

IT MUST BE, THEN, THAT I AM BACK IN THE TROLL LANDS!

YES! THESE ARE THE SURROUNDINGS I KNEW AS A YOUTH!

AND STILL, I LIKE THIS EVEN LESS THAN EVERYTHING ELSE I'VE SEEN THIS DAY!

MY PARENTS TOOK ME FROM THIS PLACE WHEN I WAS ALMOST TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER THEY TOLD ME HORRIBLE TALES OF THIS LAND! NEVER TO RETURN HERE!

YET NOW..

WAIT! I'M NOT ALONE HERE!

SOMETHING MOVES IN YON BUSHES... WATCHING ME!

NO MATTER WHAT SORT OF HIDEOUS CREATURE THIS MAY BE, IT SHALL NOT BEST ME!

HUH?

TRULY, I DO NOT REMEMBER ANY LIVING THING AS GRATIFYING AS THIS!

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? PUT ME DOWN! C'MON! THAT TICKLES!

HAHAHA, PLEASE, NYMPHS, STOP--HEED THE BUSHES ... I--

BEGONE, FAIRIES! THIS IS NO TIME FOR PLAY!

UH-OH!

THOSE WHO ENTER THIS FORBIDDEN PLACE...STARE UPON OUR SACRED TOTEM ...MUST *DIE!*

WAIT-- I...

..I-I AM A *TROLL*, NOT UNLIKE YOURSELVES! YOU CAN'T--

HOLD HIM!

I-I CANNOT!-- HE SQUIRTS FROM MY GRASP--INTO THE *SACRED PLACE!*

I HATE TO DO THIS, SOLDIERS.. I KNOW YOU'RE ONLY DUTY-BOUND...

.. BUT RIGHT NOW I HAVE SOMETHING QUITE MORE IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER THAN THAT OF YOUR CHARGE..

...MY *LIFE!*

KUB-C9-JUM!

CEASE THIS FOOLISHNESS! WE, THE TRUE INHERITORS OF THIS WORLD, SHALL NOT FIGHT AMONGST OUR-SELVES!

YOU VIOLATE THE PLACE MOST HOLY TO OUR KIND--YOUR KIND-- YET, YOUR DIVINE APPEARANCE SURELY IS THAT DECREED BY THE GREAT ONE...

.. WE MUST EXCHANGE COUNSEL!

LET NO HARM COME TO THE VISITOR ...HE SHALL BE ONE WITH OUR LAND... ONE WITH ME!

THIS I DECREE!

WITHDRAW, STAND ASIDE, AND MAKE WAY FOR OUR GUEST, GOOD WARRIORS! WE MAY NOT YET KNOW HIS NAME, STILL, HE IS GREETED AS ANY BROTHER WHO AT LAST, HAS RETURNED TO HIS HOMELAND!

UH... YOU CAN CALL ME DWAYNE!

THEY SEEM ALMOST AFRAID OF THIS OLD ONE! AND RIGHT NOW, SO MUCH THE BETTER FOR ME!

YET, I HAVE NO DESIRE WHATSOEVER TO RETURN TO MY SO-CALLED HOME-LAND!

COME, THEN, YOUNG DWAYNE-- WE HAVE MANY PACES TO TRAVEL!

AFTER DAYS OF HARD TRAVEL...

THERE -- THERE IS OUR KINGDOM!

SPEECHLESS, EH, MY SON? CAN IT BE YOU HAD ALL BUT *FORGOTTEN* THE TRUE BEAUTY AND MAJESTY OF OUR HUMBLE CITIES? OR IS THIS, PERCHANCE, THE *FIRST* TIME YOU HAVE LOOKED UPON ONE?

IT'S DIFFERENT THAN ANYTHING I HAVE EVER SEEN!

AND TRULY BRIGHTER AND LESS FOREBODING THAN I MIGHT HAVE IMAGINED!

YET, I DO REMEMBER MY PARENTS' DIRE WARNINGS ABOUT THIS PLACE!

AND, IF BUT *ONE* OF THOSE TALES MY PARENTS TOLD S TRUE--

COME! I KNOW YOU MUST BE EAGER TO MINGLE WITH OTHERS OF YOUR KIND!

AND PLEASE BE AT *EASE* IT IS ALL *TOO OBVIOUS* THAT YOU STILL QUESTION MY SINCERITY!

STRANGE THESE TOWNFOLK ARE NOTHING LIKE THOSE OVER-BEARING WARRIORS! THEY ACTUALLY SEEM HAPPY PLEASANT, EVEN FRIENDLY.

YOU MUST BE TIRED FROM OUR LONG TREK.

..AND, AS IS OUR CUSTOM WITH STRANGERS OF OUR KIND YOU SHALL BE GIVEN LODGINGS HERE, WITHIN MY ROYAL PALACE!

UH-OH! I HAVE A DISTINCT FEELING THIS S WHERE TH S IDYLLIC SETTING IS GOING TO FALL APART! IT MAY SEEM PLEASANT OUT HERE, BUT IF THIS TROLL KING BE ANYTHING LIKE THE OTHER KINGS OF THIS WORLD--

THIS IS UNLIKE ANY CASTLE I'VE EVER BEFORE SEEN! THERE SEEMS TO BE NO ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE THE COMMONER

YOU MUST TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS PLACE! IT ALL SEEMS SO STRANGE TO ME!

YOU SHALL HEAR IT! BUT ALL IN GOOD TIME!

NOW I WISH *YOU* TO TELL *ME* HOW YOU CAME TO BE IN OUR SACRED PLACE, AS WELL AS ALL ABOUT THE MIRACULOUS POWERS YOU SEEM TO POSSESS!

AH, I SEE THERE *ARE* WAR-TROLLS WITHIN THIS CASTLE, AFTER ALL! BUT ONLY TWO OF THEM! WHATEVER THAT IS THEY RE GUARDING, IT MUST BE IMPORTANT!

MOST IMPORTANT INDEED!

BUT IT SHOULD NOT CONCERN YOU RIGHT NOW, YOU MUST BE HUNGRY

NO, IT IS NOT MY STOMACH WHICH AFFECTS MY MOOD; IT IS THE WEARINESS OF THE REST OF MY BODY!

SLEEP IS WHAT I AM MOST IN NEED OF..

VERY WELL, WE WILL SPEAK AGAIN ON THE MORN!

PRESENTLY...

THESE TROLLS ARE CERTAINLY TREATING *ME* LIKE A KING! IF I WERE A LAZIER TYPE, I WOULDN'T MIND SPENDING THE REST OF MY LIFE HERE

...BUT NO! I THINK MY PRESENCE HERE MAY BE MUCH MORE *FORTUNATE* TO ME THAN I MIGHT FIRST HAVE IMAGINED!

IF THAT SCROLL THOSE WARRIORS ARE GUARDING IS *IMPORTANT*, THEN IT MUST ALSO BE *VALUABLE!*

AND IT SHOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BRING A NICE SACK OF COIN UPON THE OPEN MARKET!

BETTER WAIT TIL IT GETS A BIT LATER, THOUGH BESIDES, A FEW WINKS OF SLEEP IN THESE ELEGANT SURROUNDINGS WOULD NO DOUBT DO ME WELL!

AND HOURS BEFORE THE SUN RISES...

HMMPH! THE SAME GUARDS ARE STILL THERE! THEY MUST NEVER SLEEP!

BUT IF I DON'T ACT NOW.. I MAY NOT GET THE CHANCE!

QUICK! THE KING IS ATTACKED! SOMEONE IS TRYING TO KILL--

NO GOOD! THEY DIDN'T MOVE A MUSCLE!

I HATE TO DO THIS-- BUT...

KUB-CO-JUM!

CAN ONLY MAKE OUT A FEW OF THESE WORDS! BUT I SUPPOSE IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER WHETHER I CAN READ IT OR NOT!

WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT I GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE SOMEONE NOTICES THEIR PRECIOUS DOCUMENT IS MISSING!

THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, MISERABLE TRAITOR TO YOUR RACE!

OOO!

I FELT YOU WERE A BIT *TOO EAGER* TO BED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT! YOU ARE LIKE ALL OTHER *OUTSIDERS*! YOU MAY BE A TROLL, BUT YOU ARE TAINTED BY THE *GREED* OF HUMANS!

I SHOULD HAVE LET OUR WARRIORS *KILL* YOU WHEN FIRST YOU APPEARED!

DO NOT EXCITE YOURSELF, OLD ONE! I ADMIT MY UNDERSTANDING OF THIS "*SCRIPTURE*" IS NOT VAST.. BUT OF WHAT IMPORT CAN A TALE OF OUR ALMOST FORGOTTEN PAST BE TO...

YOU...YOU CAN READ IT??-- UNTIL THIS DAY, I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD READ THE SACRED..

I CAN'T MAKE MOST OF IT OUT JUST ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND WHAT OF IT?

THE AMOUNT YOU CAN READ DOES NOT, IN TRUTH MATTER! WHAT S OF TRUE IMPORT IS THAT YOU HAVE COME THAT FINALLY YOU ARE HERE

LISTEN OLD MAN-- I AM NOT YOUR OR ANYONE ELSE'S LIEGE I M JUST PLAIN DWAYNE

PLEASE--YOU MUST EXCUSE MY FORMER HEATED WORDS, MY LIEGE! I DID NOT KNOW

NOW, IF YOU WANT TO STAY ON YOUR KNEES, IT JUST MAKES IT EAS-ER FOR ME TO ESCAPE WITH TH--

THE OLD TROLL'S GRIP IS NOT UNLIKE THAT OF A VISE...

NO, PLEASE, MY LORD--YOU MUST HEAR ME!

...AND IT IS NOT LONG BEFORE OUR HERO FINDS HIMSELF WITHIN THE STRANGE, PRIVATE CHAMBER OF THIS ANCIENT GNOME...

IF YOU COULD BUT HAVE READ THE ENTIRE DOCUMENT, YOU WOULD HAVE REALIZED IT WAS MORE THAN H STORY IT IS PROPHECY AS WELL

AND IT IS WITHIN THOSE PROPHECIES THAT *YOU* PLAY A MOST IMPORTANT ROLE

M-ME?

YES..YOUR PARENTS, KNOWING OF YOUR DEST-NY, WERE WISE IN STEALING YOU AWAY TO THE FOREIGN LANDS..

BUT UNWISE IN BEL-EV-NG THAT THE INFANT BORN LIT BY THE STAR AKAM WOULD FOLLOW A PATH OTHER THAN IS WRITTEN!

EVEN NOW, AS WE SPEAK, THE ARMIES OF DOMINIC, PHILIPE, AND RESTIVO MARCH TO WAGE BATTLE WITH MARCUS, THE MOST DANGEROUS TO THEIR WORLD AS WELL AS OURS.

EACH PURSUING THEIR OWN PURPOSE.. EACH TO THEIR OWN DEATH!

THIS TALISMAN YOU WEAR..IT WAS PART OF A GIFT WE, THE RULERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD, BESTOWED UPON GOOD KING ALEXOR

YET THIS BE BUT ONE QUARTER OF THE WHOLE. ITS POWER ALONE IS VIRTUALLY NAUGHT WHEN COMPARED TO THAT WHICH THE ENTIRE RELIC CAN ACCOMPLISH!

"WE PRESENTED THIS GIFT OF ALLIANCE UNTO THE WORTHY RULER OF THE OUTERLANDS, THE FATHER OF THE FOUR PRESENT WARLORDS. AS LONG AS WE LIVED, THERE WAS HARMONY BETWIXT OUR TWO RACES."

BEFORE ALEXOR DIED AND SAILED TO THE NETHER WORLD...

...HE DIVIDED THE GIFT WE HAD GIVEN INTO FOUR, GIVING ONE PIECE TO EACH OF HIS SONS...

NEVER IMAGINING THAT PHILIPE, HIS YOUNGEST, WOULD BE THE ONLY ONE WITH HONOUR AMONG THEM!

WE TROLLS COULD ONLY WAIT FOR THE PROPHE-SIED SAVIOUR OF OUR PEOPLE TO APPEAR!

AND THAT DAY IS *NOW!*

THIS AMULET, WHICH WAS GIVEN TO PHILIPE, AND *STOLEN* BY MARCUS, IS THE KEY..

..TO FUL-FILLMENT OF YOUR *FATE*, MY SON.

I HAVE WAITED MANY YEARS FOR THIS MOMENT!

WAIT, I--

EVEN NOW MARCUS SEEKS HIS LOST PRIZE.

..TO *DESTROY* ITS HOLDER!

NO! I..

PEACE WILL RETURN TO THESE LANDS ONLY WHEN THESE AMULETS...

ARE POSSESSED --BY *NONE!*

FOLLOW THE LITTLE ONE, MY WARRIORS! I-- *EEEEE!!!!!!...*

..NEVER WISHED THIS TO HAPPEN.

THE AMULET! IT LIES UNTOUCHED!

THIS THING HOLDS GREAT POWER --AND DEATH!

AAAAAHH!!! HE SHOULD NOT HAVE DIED!

I DO NOT WISH THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH HAS BEEN THRUST UPON ME!

THE BLAME FOR THIS ABOMINATION LIES WITH THOSE THREE BROTHERS WHO SEEK POWER BY THE DEATH OF THOSE AROUND THEM! WHY CANNOT THEY STRIVE FOR PEACE AS THEIR GOOD BROTHER PHILIPE?-- THOSE INSANE BASTARDS. THOSE...

..EH-- WHAT IS THIS?... WHY DO YOU KNEEL TO ME, TROLLS?

WE WOULD SERVE YOU NOW, MY LIEGE...

EVEN AS WE SERVED THE ANCIENT ONE!

THEN SERVE ME YOU WILL!

I VOW THIS THAT HIS DEATH SHALL NOT HAVE BEEN IN VAIN!

IF ALL THEY UNDERSTAND IS BLOOD. THEN WE SHALL ADDRESS THEM SO...WITH BLADE AND LANCE AND A FURY THEY HAVE NOT WITNESSED IN THEIR LIFETIMES!

TO THE CASTLE OF WARLORD MARCUS!

TO DECIDE THE FATE OF THIS WORLD!

EVEN AS THE TROLLS RIDE TO DO COMBAT, WE FIND THE WARLORD MARCUS ON A HIGH RAMPART WITH BOTH OF HIS HANDS QUITE FULL!

THE POWER I MUST EXERT WITHOUT THE AMULET OF WILL DRAINS ME!

I MUST PERCEIVE LESS DIFFICULT MEANS TO COUNTER THE ATTACKS OF...

"RESTIVO AND HIS WAR MACHINES FROM THE EAST!

DOMINIC, WHO FOLLOWS HIS "HOLY KNIGHTS" THROUGH THE CASTLE'S SOUTH WALL EVEN NOW!

WAIT, I KNOW WHERE I MUST GO... WHAT I MUST DO!

AND PHILIPE, WHO, IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, MAY PROVE MY MOST DANGEROUS FOE TODAY!!

STAND ASIDE, YOU FOOL! I SHALL RELIEVE THESE TIRED WARRIORS OF THEIR DUTIES!

AGGGH

UNNGH

ENHH

AAGGG

UNFF!

SEE HOW EASILY THESE POOR UNFORTUNATES FALL BEFORE ME, MY KNIGHTS?!

MARCUS HIDES BEHIND THE PASSAGE MOST GUARDED CUT A PATH THROUGH THEM, MY CHAMPION, SO THAT I MAY PLUNGE MY BLADE INTO HIS EVIL HEART!

YES, I CAN FEEL MY SORCERER BROTHER'S DEEP DESIRE FOR REPENTANCE!

FOLLOW THE REST, THEY WILL LEAD US TO...

GO, MY LEGIONS.

GUARD THE ENTRANCES OF THIS CHAMBER TO YOUR LAST!

AND *LEAD* THEM TO ME!

...WHILE AT THE SAME MOMENT!

PHILIPE! STAND ASIDE THAT MY ARMY GAIN ENTRY!

HOLD THY REINS, TROLL WE HAVE TRAVELED FAR AND EACH BREATH I TAKE GROWS HOTTER TO BE THE FIRST TO CHALLENGE MARCUS!

COME KNAVE, YOU FALL TOO EASILY... HOW SHOULD I REST TONIGHT IF I HAVE NOT EVEN BROKEN SWEAT IN THIS SKIRMISH?

THEN LET US JOIN FORCES FOR THE PRESENT

. BUT I HAVE LEARNED OF THINGS IN THESE PAST DAYS THAT MAKE THE DEFEAT OF MARCUS IMPERATIVE . THINGS THAT YOU COULD NOT KNOW!

I KNOW THAT HE IS *MY* BROTHER AND THAT I MUST ENCOUNTER HIM. OR ALL THAT I AND MY FATHER HAVE LIVED FOR SHALL BE FOR NAUGHT!

WE WILL GUARD YOUR REAR UNTIL YOU ARE OUT OF MY SIGHT S VIEW . THEN I MUST FOLLOW...

AND THEN IF YOU HAVE NOT DONE THE DEED -- MY AX WILL GO FOR HIS BLOOD!

I CONSIDER IT FAIR, TROLL... GOD BE WITH YOU!

THUS...

KEEP HIS FORCES BUSY BERTRAM! I SHALL PROCEED ON, SO THAT I MAY FACE MY BROTHER MYSELF!

WHATEVER THY WISH, MY KING!

...PHILIPE ARRIVES JUST IN TIME TO WITNESS A MOST CHILLING, A MOST AWE-INSPIRING TABLEAU...

THE TROLL WAS RIGHT! MARCUS'S POWER IS BEYOND IMAGINATION!

I CAN ONLY HOPE HE HAS EXPENDED TOO MUCH OF HIS ENERGY PROTECTING HIMSELF THUS...

OH GOD, SAVE ME!

LEAVING HIMSELF DRAINED AND UNABLE TO STOP MY BLADE FROM ENDING HIS EVIL REIGN OF MADNESS!

MARCUS, YOU DEMON!

MEANTIME...

I CAN WAIT NO LONGER GUARD ME-- I'M GOING IN'

MMMPH SEEMS MY GAPS ARE THE ONLY MAD I NEED TO FIND YON FRAY..

AND I HOPE AT LEAST ONE OF THOSE SCREAMS COMES FROM THE LUNGS OF THAT STINKHOG MARCUS

NONETHELESS I WILL BE MAJORLY DISAPPOINTED IF I DO NOT GET MY CHANCE TO PLUNGE MY BLADE INTO

AVAVI

SAVE ME, SAVE ME PLEASE!

UNNNNH

THAT SO GOOD FOR

WHAT-- IN THE NAME OF DARKNESS AM I GETTING MYSELF

NO?

FOOLS NONE OF YOU ARE A MATCH FOR ME

AND THE THREE OF YOU TOGETHER ARE AS EASY TO DEFEAT AS YOU WOULD BE SEPARATELY'

BROTHER.. TAKE THIS HELLISH THING AWAY I PROMISE, I WILL DO THY BIDDING. JUST TAKE IT AWAY!

YOU WILL ALL DO MY BIDDING

WITH THESE THREE AMULETS I SHALL BE NEARLY INVINCIBLE AND ONCE I FIND THE FOURTH, I SHALL BE A GOD!

YOU YOURSELF STOLE IT FROM ME YEARS AGO. HA! MY HEART SINGS AAAAAH TO SEE IT LOST FROM YOU!

AND EVEN IF I DID KNOW OF ITS LOCATION, I WOULD NOT.. AAAAGH!

YOU CERTAINLY ARE THE MOST FOOLISH OF MY BROTHERS, PHILIPE! DO YOU NOT REALIZE I PLAN FOR YOU TO DIE WHETHER I FIND THE OTHER AMULET OR NOT?

MARCUS!

EH?

I BELIEVE THIS IS WHAT YOU SEEK

BUT BEFORE THIS MOMENT IS PAST YOU WILL NEITHER SEEK NOR NEED MORE FROM THIS LIFE

THE AMULET... AND THE TROLL!

I AM PLEASED... GIVE IT TO M-

KUB-C9-JUM!

AS LONG AS I HOLD THE LAST AMULET, YOU ARE POWERLESS AGAINST ME...

...AND I COMMAND THIS ANCIENT THING TO SEND YOU TO THE FARTHEST REACHES OF *HELL!*

HA HA HA HA HA!

YOU FOOLISH LITTLE MAN!

DID YOU HONESTLY THINK THAT *YOU* AND THAT ONE *SMALL PIECE OF METAL* COULD TRULY *VANQUISH* ME?

WHOOMP!

OOOFF!

HE HAS ME... BUT I SHALL *DIE* BEFORE I *RELEASE* THE CHARM!

I, WHO TAKE LEAGUE WITH FORCES DARKER THAN YOUR COMPREHENSION?-- *RELEASE THE AMULET!*

C-CANNOT. LET GO! AS LONG AS I HOLD T, I *MUST* HAVE *SOME* CHANCE!

THINK DWAYNE *THINK!*

AHH, ITS *LIFE* STREAMS INTO MY VERY BEING GIVES ME *STRENGTH*. *REBIRTHS* ME!

I BECOME LORD OF *ALL!*

I GROW WEAKER I... CANNOT.. HOLD IT...

..AHH... THE .. PAIN! I . WISH. I . WISH . THAT... THIS AMULET .

... SHOULD NO LONGER EXIST!

NO! ITS FORCE-- YOU TURN IT IN ON ITSELF!

ARE YOU MAD?? YOU CANNOT HAVE UTTERED IT! THE AMULETS THAT I POSSESS CANNOT SUBSIST WITHOUT THE FOURTH!

FWOOOM

YOU FOOL! YOU GODFORSAKEN LITTLE FOOL!

AAAGGHH!

THE AMULETS!

THEY'RE BURNING UP!

MARCUS. DROP THEM! THEY LIVE NOW ONLY TO THEIR OWN END! DROP THEM...

. THEY RE CONSUMING YOU!

NEVER. I AM ONE WITH THEM .. I . AAAAAHHH...

LORDS ABOVE! HE SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO ME! HE...

HE WOULD NOT HAVE LISTENED TO *ANYONE!* HIS *GREED* WAS FAR MORE CONSUMING THAN THE PRIZES HE SOUGHT!

AND IT WAS THIS GREED THAT TRANSFORMED HIM INTO THE TWISTED THING BEFORE US!

YEEERK!

ALAS, PERHAPS MARCUS HAS NOT REALLY CHANGED! HE HAS SIMPLY BECOME WHAT HE ALWAYS WAS! THE BEING WHICH ALWAYS LAY BENEATH HIS MYSTIC TRAPPINGS!

THOUGHT I DID WITNESS EVERY POSSIBLE EVENT ON MY TRAVELS IN THIS WORLD...BUT THIS--IT SURELY GIVES ME *GOOSEFLESH!*

YOU TWO, NOT UNLIKE MARCUS, DERIVED ALL YOUR STRENGTH FROM YOUR GREED AND FROM YOUR AMULETS! YOU DEPENDED UPON THOSE MYSTIC CHARMS!

AND NOW THAT THEY NO LONGER EXIST, I COULD EASILY PUT YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE UNDER MY COMMAND!

BUT THIS I DO NOT WISH! I DECREE ONLY THAT YOU RETURN TO YOUR LANDS AND CONSIDER THE LESSON YOU HAVE LEARNED THIS DAY!

AH, NOW I REMEMBER-- WHAT THE OLD TROLL SAID! THAT ONE DAY THE AMULETS WOULD NO LONGER EXIST, AND UPON THAT DAY PEACE WOULD REIGN THROUGHOUT OUR WORLD!

WELL, BERT, GOOD FELLOW... THINGS HAVE TURNED OUT QUITE WELL, EH? REMEMBER HOW THIS WHOLE THING STARTED?-- WE HAD CAPTURED WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS RESTIVO, AND--

YES, *DWAYNE*... I REMEMBER! I REMEMBER *TOO WELL!*

ULP!

I REMEMBER HOW YOU FORFEITED ME TO MARCUS AND HOW YOU STROLLED OFF WITH MY PURSE... HOW YOU LEFT ME TO...

B-BUT...

BERTRAM! RELEASE HIM!

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU HOLD AGAINST OUR GOOD FRIEND, DWAYNE. IT *WAS* HE AND HE ALONE WHO WON THIS WAR FOR US! HE HAS SAVED OUR *LIVES!*

HEROIC...HMMPH!

VERY WELL, I SHALL DROP THE ENTIRE MATTER!

WHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE! I'D BETTER TAKE MY LEAVE BEFORE BERT CATCHES HOLD OF ME AGAIN!

YOU NEED NOT WITHDRAW, GOOD DWAYNE! THERE IS MUCH WE *OWE* YOU!

OOMPH!

AH, YOUR *GRATITUDE* IS ALL I DESIRE, SIRE! FOR I HAVE FOUND A PLACE IN THESE LANDS THAT I CAN TRULY CALL *HOME!* --FAREWELL!

AND AS ALL TALES SHOULD CONCLUDE, THERE NOW IS PEACE AND CONTENTMENT BETWEEN ALL THE FOLK IN ALL THE LANDS OF THIS WORLD!

IF ONLY THESE KINDLY TROLLS KNEW WHAT IMPISH MENACE THEY CALL UPON THEMSELVES!

FAREWELL!

FUNNY... EVEN MARCUS'S CASTLE HAS LOST THE LOOK OF ITS FORMER EVIL TRAPPINGS!

IF ONLY I COULD BE CERTAIN OF SATISFACTION IN MY NEW POSITION IN THE TROLL LANDS!

I WILL BE AS *UNACCUSTOMED* TO MY STRANGE NEW HOME AS ANY *OUTWORLDER*... THE *ODD LANDSCAPES*.. THE *PECULIAR BUILDINGS* ...THE...

WAIT A MINUTE... THAT IS IT! *THE TROLL LANDS!*

I WONDER JUST HOW MUCH THESE OUTWORLDERS WOULD *PAY* TO SEE THEM?

GUIDED TOURS, MAYBE...

YEEP!

KING
PHILLIPE
LORD OF
THE NORTHERN
REACHES

WHIRLPOOL

LAND
OF
PERPETUAL
MISTS

FOREST
BLACKMOOR

ELUNDEN MTS

EAST
LAN
(UNEXPL

SEA
CHILDREN OF
KRAKEN

CRACKN
PASS

THRONE OF
VULCAN

MOON
LAKE

LAND
of the
TROLLS
(MOSTLY UNKNOWN)

REALM of
WIZARD
KING
MARCUS

ANGER
MT.

LAND
OF
BEAST PEOPLE

DOOMOR
BOG

SOUTH PASSAGE

INLAND
SEA
of
KRILL

GREAT
WALL

MOLD
FOREST

KINGDOM OF
DOM
THE PIOUS

PRINCE
OF WONDERS
KING
RESTIVO

WILD
LANDS

VALE
OF THE DEAD

GIANT
CLIFFS

FALLS
OF
GORGON

BRAKEN
WOOD

BLACK